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Regents Hosts Two-Year College Retention Conference

BATON ROUGE - Creating an academic environment that promotes student retention is a *campus-wide* responsibility - a responsibility that falls to faculty as well as administrators. That was the key message at a two-day student retention conference for the state's two-year colleges, hosted by the Board of Regents in Alexandria.

Regents hosted 75 community college administrators and faculty, representing all nine of the state's community colleges, at the workshop held at Alexandria's Holiday Inn Conference Center. The aim of the conference was to help those institutions develop plans to improve student success after enrollment and thereby improve retention. Enhancing student retention at all postsecondary institutions is an essential element in the overall implementation of Louisiana's *Master Plan for Public Postsecondary Education*.

The *Louisiana Two-Year College Retention Conference* was conducted by Noel-Levitz, a national leader in college enrollment management and student retention strategies. Consultants from Noel-Levitz teamed up with experienced university practitioners from around the country to present insights from national research and from their work with two-year colleges nationwide. Participants learned retention strategies that are having the greatest impact for two-year institutions in other states, as well as key components to include in a successful retention action plan. They also learned how to isolate and deal with specific attrition risk factors and how to more fully engage their colleagues in improving the quality of student life and learning on their campus.

"This is a pivotal time for higher education in Louisiana," said Louisiana Commissioner of Higher Education Joe Savoie. "Improving student retention by improving the quality of student life and learning at Louisiana's two-year institutions is an integral step in assuring the success of the new four-year admission requirements scheduled to be put in place by 2005."

Sessions available to conference attendees included such titles as "Enhancing Academic and Social Integration for Freshman Success and Retention," "Support for Success in Mathematics," "Meeting the Needs of Commuters," and "Transforming Developmental Courses into a Developmental Education Program."

Louisiana's two-year colleges participating in the conference included Baton Rouge Community College, Bossier Parish Community College, Delgado Community College (New Orleans), Elaine P. Nunez Community

(More)

Retention Conference

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College (Chalmette), Louisiana Delta Community College (West Monroe), LSU-Eunice, River Parishes Community College (Sorrento), South Louisiana Community College (Lafayette), and Southern University-Shreveport.

The two-year retention conference was held on March 31 - April 1. A similar conference is scheduled for the state's four-year campuses on April 7-8.